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JAPAN - COMMUNIST CHINA: The current visit of a Japan Socialist Party (JSP) delegation to Peking is likely to attract unusual interest in Japan.

A high-ranking JSP group, led by the party's doctrinaire chairman Narita, arrived in Peking on 21 October for a two-week visit at the invitation of Premier Chou En-lai. It followed a number of private visits to China by JSP officials earlier in the year. Narita's visit will be the highpoint in a series of recent JSP pilgrimages to various Communist states, including the USSR, North Korea, and North Vietnam.

Media coverage of this trip is likely to be greater than usual because of the recent surge in the Japanese public's interest in China as a result of Canada's recognition. The JSP, the largest opposition party in Japan, no doubt will welcome the publicity in view of its declining support.

The trip, however, is likely to provoke further trouble in the dissension-filled party, particularly if chairman Narita agrees to Peking's expected request for a declaration that "US imperialism" is Japan's principal enemy and that militarism in Japan is "fully revived." Because a declaration of this sort would contradict the official party line, this could give the moderates a clear-cut issue with which to confront the extreme left at the JSP national convention next month. Whether this issue will add sufficient weight to existing differences to provoke a split in the party at that time is not yet clear, although an eventual split appears likely.

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TURKEY: Prime Minister Demirel faces new tests in the national convention of the ruling Justice Party (JP) which opened today in Ankara.

Demirel spent much of the summer politicking throughout the country and should be able to maintain control of the party. He continues to face opposition, however, and in the process of consolidating his party strength may alienate other elements, thus reducing his parliamentary majority still further. In the past few days, other adversaries within the JP have begun to show their hands, suggesting that the convention may become somewhat more contentious than had been anticipated.

Demirel may yet face a more serious situation when parliament reconvenes on 1 November. The speaker of the lower house resigned recently, apparently to make himself available for the premiership if Demirel falters. Although the former speaker does not appear to be a serious threat to Demirel's standing within the JP, he offers the anti-Demirel forces in the opposition a willing and relatively attractive candidate. Moreover, as a leading member of the JP, his switch to the dissident faction could be a serious blow to Demirel.

In addition, three of the minor parties are also reportedly considering a joint effort with the former JP dissidents to dump Demirel. The former party dissidents who were expelled from the JP last summer already have declared their intention to form a "national front." Such a move could present Demirel with his strongest challenge thus far.

Much now will depend on the progress of controversial legislation, the ability of the government to maintain law and order, and Demirel's ability to control his small majority in parliament. Growing criticism of the government's handling of the cholera problem in Istanbul could also become a weapon in the hands of anti-Demirel forces. [REDACTED]

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IRAQ-JORDAN: Press reports that Iraq's Salah-al-Din military force is withdrawing from Jordan have not been confirmed. A suggestion by King Husayn to the Iraqis that their force should be removed or else dispersed and subordinated to the Jordan Arab Army was rebuffed only last week. The Baghdad authorities have preferred to keep a sizable force in Jordan as a demonstration of their militancy toward Israel and as a means of keeping unreliable troops far from home. It is, nevertheless, possible that circumstances in Iraq--the political maneuvering going on in Baghdad or the threat of renewed Kurdish insurgency--could impel the recall of all or part of the Salah-al-Din force. [REDACTED]

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SIERRA LEONE: Prime Minister Stevens gained an important political victory this week when parliament approved his state of emergency declaration of last month. This ratification gives the government sweeping powers of arrest, search, and censorship and boosts Stevens' stock and that of party hardliners who had advised the crackdown on opponents of the regime. Stevens is continuing to consolidate his control over the security forces and more arrests are probable. The prime minister has thus preserved his immediate position, but the basic divisions that produced the recent violence persist. [REDACTED]

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USSR-SCANDINAVIA: Scandinavia Air Lines (SAS) has become the fourth international airline to receive permission to fly from Moscow to Tokyo via Siberia. In return, the Soviet airline, Aeroflot, has been given onward rights from Scandinavia to London, Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam as well as to two unspecified cities in both North and South America. At present, Aeroflot flies to Montreal and New York, but not to South America.

SAS is expected to begin the Siberian route next April with one round-trip flight a week. Japan Air Lines, Air France, and BOAC began flying the route during the past six months. [REDACTED]

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INTERNATIONAL AVIATION: The legal committee of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is expected to conclude a special meeting tomorrow without taking any definitive action on the US proposal for a boycott of air services to and from any nation harboring hijackers engaged in international blackmail. Only France and Egypt took a firm position against the US initiative, however, and it is likely to be considered again soon by a special ICAO subcommittee. The Canadian proposal that such hijacking problems be dealt with by amending bilateral air agreements, which is a lengthy process, got little support and may not be offered again. Moscow's recent decision to join ICAO will permit the Soviets to participate in future meetings of the organization. [REDACTED]

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ARGENTINA: Labor leaders are hoping that the general strike today will be as extensive as the peaceful 24-hour strike on 9 October--reportedly the most successful since the days of ex-president Peron. The strike is aimed at gaining higher wages in the face of rising living costs. The government intends to take a tough line if strikers get out of hand, thus increasing the risk of violence in any confrontation between security forces and workers. Scattered violence and terrorist incidents seem likely. [REDACTED]

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VENEZUELA: The government has moved one step closer to completing oil service contracts, the new formula to provide increased government profits from petroleum production. Seven of the 11 bidders--including Venezuela's leading petroleum producer, a subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey--were eliminated from the competition. Successful bidders will be announced next month and press reports indicate that Shell and Occidental are in the forefront. The service contracts, which will eventually replace concessions, are expected to provide the government with an 85-percent profit share compared with a 70-percent average under present arrangements.

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